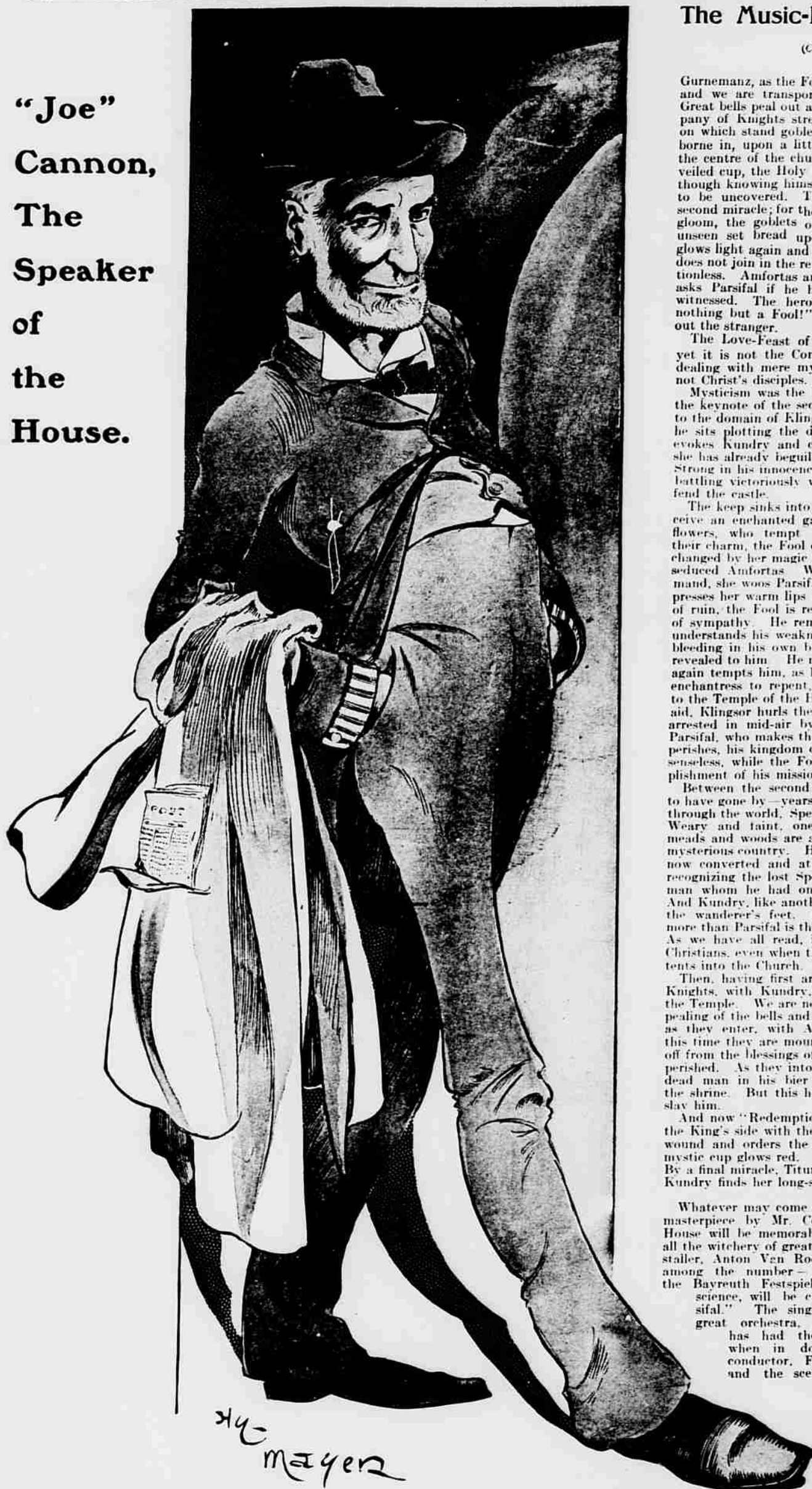


**"Joe"
Cannon,
The
Speaker
of
the
House.**



The Music-Drama of the Miracle

(Continued from page 3)

Gurnemanz, as the Fool wonders. The woodland scene and we are transported to the interior of a castle. Great bells peal out and choristers are heard. A company of Knights streams in and seats itself at round tables, on which stand goblets—one for each Knight. The King is borne in, upon a litter. He is racked with pain. In the centre of the church, boys place a shroud over a veiled cup, the Holy Grail. Obedient to the King's command, though knowing himself unworthy, Amfortas unveils the cup to be uncovered. The church darkens. We behold a second miracle; for the cup glows deep red in the mystic gloom, the goblets of the Knights glow, while hands unseen set bread upon the tables. Suddenly the church glows light again and the Knights eat and drink. Amfortas does not join in the repast, nor does the Fool withstand. Amfortas and the Knights depart and Gurnemanz asks Parsifal if he has understood the miracle. Parsifal witnesses. The hero shakes his head. "Nothing but a Fool!" says the King. "You are not the stranger."

The Love-Feast of the Knights is over. Amfortas yet it is not the Communion. Parsifal is not dealing with mere myths. The King is not Christ's disciples.

Mysticism was the keynote of the opera. The key-note of the second, which takes place in the Temple to the domain of Klingsor. In the keep of the Temple he sits plotting the destruction of the Temple. Klingsor evokes Kundry and commands her to beguile Parsifal as she has already beguiled Amfortas. Reluctant, Kundry is strong in his innocence, the Fool comes, and with it of his battling victoriously with the unfaithful Temple. He defends the castle.

The keep sinks into the depths, and, in its place, we perceive an enchanted garden, peopled with sirens attired as flowers, who tempt Parsifal. But, though conscious of their charm, the Fool does not yield. Then Kundry comes, changed by her magic art into the radiant creature who had seduced Amfortas. With all the allurements at her command, she woos Parsifal and fancies she has won him as she presses her warm lips to his. But, when on the very brink of ruin, the Fool is rescued by another miracle—a miracle of sympathy. He remembers the anguish of Amfortas, he understands his weakness, and he feels that sinner's wound bleeding in his own breast. On the instant his mission is revealed to him. He must heal Amfortas. In vain Kundry again tempts him, as he prays for Divine help, exhorts the enchantress to repent, and implores her to lead him back to the Temple of the Holy Grail. Hurrying to his servant's aid, Klingsor hurls the blessed Spear at Parsifal. But it is arrested in mid-air by a fourth miracle, and grasped by Parsifal, who makes the sign of the Cross with it. Klingsor perishes, his kingdom crumbles into dust, and Kundry falls senseless, while the Fool goes upon his way to the accomplishment of his mission.

Between the second and third acts, years are supposed to have gone by—years during which the Fool has wandered through the world, Spear in hand—seeking for Monsalvat. Weary and faint, one Good Friday morning, when the meads and woods are at their loveliest, he at last finds the mysterious country. He is met by Gurnemanz and Kundry, now converted and athirst for death. Knowing him and recognizing the lost Spear, Gurnemanz does homage to the man whom he had once scorned, and anoints his head. And Kundry, like another Magdalen, brings water to refresh the wanderer's feet. But she is not the Magdalen, any more than Parsifal is the Christ, though he baptizes Kundry. As we have all read, it was the custom of the primitive Christians, even when they were not priests, to receive penitents into the Church.

Then, having first arrayed him in the mail of the Grail Knights, with Kundry, Gurnemanz again leads Parsifal to the Temple. We are near the end. Once more we hear the pealing of the bells and watch the procession of the Knights as they enter, with Amfortas and the Holy Grail. But this time they are mourning for old Titurel, who, being cut off from the blessings of the cup, owing to his son's sin, has perished. As they intone a dirge, the Knights bring in the dead man in his bier. They exhort Amfortas to unveil the shrine. But this he dare not do, and so he bids them slay him.

And now "Redemption" comes, with Parsifal. Touching the King's side with the recovered Spear, the hero heals his wound and orders the unveiling of the Grail. Again the mystic cup glows red. All kneel as the Fool lifts the Grail. By a final miracle, Titurel for a moment comes to life, while Kundry finds her long-sought rest in death.

Whatever may come of it, the production of this strange masterpiece by Mr. Conried at the Metropolitan Opera House will be memorable. All the resources of stage art; all the witchery of great artists—Milka Ternina, Alois Burgstaller, Anton Van Rooy, Otto Goritz and Robert Blase among the number—trained in Wagner's own temple, the Bayreuth Festspielhaus; all the inventions of stage science, will be called on to do justice to "Parsifal." The singers, too, will be supported by a great orchestra, directed by Alfred Hertz, who has had the advantage of being counselled when in doubt by the eminent Bayreuth conductor, Felix Mottl—while the costumes and the scenery, brought from Vienna, will as we can hardly doubt make the production wonderful.

Wagner, the great wonder worker, created many masterpieces. In "Parsifal" he gave the admiring world his parting miracle.